DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 389 764 UD 030 682

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TITLE The Vision of the Anointed. Self-Congratulation as a Basis for Social Policy.
REPORT NO ISBN-0-465-08994-1
PUB DATE 95
NOTE 312p.
AVAILABLE FROM BasicBooks, 10 East 53rd Street, New York, NY 10022-5299 ($25).
PUB TYPE Books (010) -- Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120)

EDRS PRICE Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Elitism; Ideology; *Mass Media Role; *Policy Formation; Political Attitudes; Political Influences; *Public Policy; Social Action; *Social Change; Social Problems; Sociocultural Patterns; Urban Areas
IDENTIFIERS Discourse; *Elite Values; *Self Righteousness

ABSTRACT

Most contemporary social and political discourse in the United States takes place within a particular framework of assumptions. The rise of mass media, mass politics, and massive government means that an elite group of articulate people have great leverage in determining the course of the whole society. This book examines the vision of the country's elite intelligentsia, the anointed, and explores how their vision consists of a set of self-congratulatory assumptions that are rhetorical assertions rather than critical thinking. The prevailing vision of our time holds that those who are not in agreement are on a lower plane morally, inferior to the benighted who hold other views. When social policies favored by the anointed fail, a pattern of crisis, proposed solution, results, and response that does not acknowledge failure ensues. The contemporary vision of the anointed treats reality as highly malleable and handles unpleasant experiences as readily preventable. The self-flattering and self-centered vision of the anointed makes assumptions that empirical evidence cannot confirm. The nine chapters in this book are entitled: (1) "Flattering Unction"; (2) "The Pattern"; (3) "By the Numbers"; (4) "The Irrelevance of Evidence"; (5) "The Anointed versus the Benighted"; (6) "Crusades of the Anointed"; (7) "The Vocabulary of the Anointed"; (8) "Courting Disaster"; and (9) "Optional Reality." (SLD)

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